

Filigree Ball

By ANNA KATHARINE GREEN,

Author of "The Mystery of Agatha Webb," "Lost Man's Lane," Etc.

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been given time to sink into the minds of the jury. Coroner Z. increased the effect produced by confronting Jeffrey with witnesses who testified to the friendly, if not love-like, relations which had existed between himself and Miss Tuttle prior to the appearance of his wife upon the scene, closing with a question which brought out the admission, by no means new, that the engagement had ever taken place between him and Miss Tuttle and hence that a bond had been canceled by his marriage with Miss Moore.

Some hint of what the coroner contemplated had already escaped him in the persistent and seemingly inconsequent questions to which he had subjected this witness. That the time had now come for a more direct attack, and the interest rose correspondingly high when the coroner, lifting again to sight the scrap of paper containing the few pitiful lines so often quoted, asked of the now anxious and agitated witness if he had ever noticed any similarity between the handwriting of his wife and that of Miss Tuttle.

An indignant "No" was about to pass his lips when he suddenly checked himself and said more fully: "There may have been a similarity. I hardly know. I have seen too little of Miss Tuttle to judge."

This occasioned a diversion. Specimens of Miss Tuttle's handwriting were produced, which, after having been duly proved, were passed down to the jury along with the communication professionally signed by Mrs. Jeffrey. The grunts of astonishment which ensued as the knowing heads drew near over those several papers caused Mr. Jeffrey to flush and finally to cry out with startling emphasis:

"I know that those words were written by my wife."

But when the coroner asked him his reasons for this conviction he could or would not state them.

"I have said," he stolidly repeated, "that was all."

The coroner made no comment, but when after some further inquiry which added little to the general knowledge he dismissed Mr. Jeffrey and recalled Loretta there was that in his tone which warned us that the really serious portion of the day's examination was about to begin.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE appearance of this witness had undergone a change since she last stood before us. She was shamed and still, but her manner showed resolve and a fierish determination to face the situation which could not be avoided in the breasts of those who had Mr. Jeffrey's honor and personal welfare at heart. A manly deed, as if they already foresaw the dark shadow which minute by minute was slowly sinking over a household which up to a week ago had been the envy and admiration of all Washington society.

The first answer she made revealed both the cause of her shame and the reason of her firmness. It was in response to the question whether she, Loretta, had seen Miss Tuttle before she went out on the walk she was said to have taken immediately after Mrs. Jeffrey's final departure from the house.

Her words were these:

"I did, sir. I do not think Miss Tuttle knows it, but I saw her in Mrs. Jeffrey's room. I am not especially proud of what I did that night, but I was led into it by degrees, and I am sure I was the lady's pardon. And then she went on to relate how after she had seen Mrs. Jeffrey leave the house she went into her room with the intention of putting it to rights. As this was no more than her duty, no fault could be found with her, but she owned that when she had finished this task and removed all evidence of Mrs. Jeffrey's frenzied condition she had no business to linger at the table turning over the letters she found lying there.

Her cheeks were burning now, for she had found herself obliged to admit that she had read enough of these letters to be sure that they had no reference to the quarrel then pending between her mistress and Mr. Jeffrey. Her eyes felt as if they were looking steadily at the jury, and she was as conscious then as now of having no hesitations with these papers; so conscious, indeed, that when she heard Miss Tuttle's step at the door, her one idea was to hide herself.

That she could stand and face that lady never so much as occurred to her. Her own guilty consciousness made her cheeks too hot for her to wish to meet an eye which had never rested on her so kindly; so nothing how straight the curtains fell over one of the windows on the opposite side of the room, she dashed toward it and slipped in out of sight just as Miss Tuttle came in. This window was one seldom used, owing to the fact that it overlooked an adjoining wall, so she had no fear of Miss Tuttle approaching it. Consequently, she could stand there quite at her ease, and as the curtains in falling behind her had not come quite together, she really could not help seeing what that lady did.

Here the witness paused with every appearance of looking for some token of disapprobation from the crowd. But she encountered nothing there but eager anxiety for her to proceed, so without waiting for the coroner's question, she added in so many words:

"She went first to the bookshelves. We had expected it; but yet a general suppressed exclamations could be heard."

"And what did she do there?"

"Took down a book, after looking carefully up and down the shelves."

"What color of book?"

"A green one with red figures on it. I could see the cover plainly as she took it down."

"Like this one?"

Loretta's testimony creates a sensation



on this, pressed the girl to continue, asking if Miss Tuttle left the room immediately after turning from the bookshelves. Loretta replied no; that, on the contrary, she stood for some minutes near them, gazing in what seemed like a great distress of mind straight upon the floor, after which she moved in an agitated way and with more than one anxious look behind her into the adjoining room, where she paused before a large bureau. As this bureau was devoted entirely to Mr. Jeffrey's use, Loretta experienced some surprise at seeing his wife's sister approach it in so stealthily a manner. Consequently she was watching with all her might when this young lady opened the upper drawer and with very evident emotion thrust her hand into it.

What she took out or whether she took out anything this spy upon her movements could not say, for when Loretta heard the drawer being pushed back into place she drew the curtains close, perceiving that Miss Tuttle would have to face this window in coming back. However, she ventured upon one other peep through them just as that lady was leaving the room and remembered as if it were yesterday how day white her face looked and how she held her left hand pressed close against the folds of her dress. It was but a few minutes after that Miss Tuttle left the house.

As we all knew what was kept in that drawer, the conclusion was obvious. She wished to see if his pistol was still there or if it had been taken away by her sister.

The temerity which had made it possible to associate the name of such a man as Francis Jeffrey with an outrageous crime having been thus in a measure explained, the coroner recalled that gentleman and again thoroughly surprised the gaping public.

Had the witness accompanied his wife to the Moore house?

"No."

Had he met her there by any appointment he had made with her or which had been made for them both by some third person?

"No."

Had he been at the Moore house on the night of the 11th at any time previous to the hour when he was brought there by the officials?

"No."

Would he glance at this impression of certain finger tips which had been left in the dust of the southwest chamber mantle?

He had already noted them.

Now would he place his left hand on the paper and see—

"It is not necessary," he burst forth, "I own to those marks."

That is, I have no doubt they were made by my hand. Here, unconsciously, his eyes flew to the member thus referred to, as if conscious that in some way it had proved a traitor to him; after which his gaze traveled slowly my way, with an indecipherable question in it which roused my conscience and made the trick by which I had got the impression of his hand seem less of a triumph than I had heretofore considered it.

The next minute he was answering the coroner under oath, very much as he had answered him in the unofficial interview at which I had been present.

I acknowledge having been in the Moore house and even having been in its southwest chamber, but not at the time supposed. It was on the previous night. He went on to relate how, being in a nervous condition and having the key to this old dwelling in his pocket, he had amused himself by going through its dilapidated interior. All of this made a doubtful impression which was greatly emphasized when, in reply to the inquiry as to where he got the light to see by, he admitted that he had come upon a candle in an upstairs room and made use of that; though he could not remember what he had done with this candle afterward, and looked dazed and quite at sea, till the coroner suggested that he might have carried it into the closet of the room where his fingers had left their impression in the dust of the mantle shelf.

Then he broke down like a man from whom some prop is suddenly snatched and looked around for a seat. This was given him, while a silence, the most dreadful I ever experienced, held every one there in check. But he speedily rallied and, with the remark that he was a little confused in regard to the incidents of that night, waited with a wild look in his averted eye for the coroner's next question.

Unhappily for him, it was in continuation of the same subject. Had he bought candles or not at the grocer's around the corner? Yes, he had. Before visiting the house? Yes. Had he also bought matches? Yes. What kind? Common safety matches. Had

he noticed when he got home that the box he had just bought was half empty? No. Nevertheless he had used many matches in going through this old house, had he not? Possibly. To light his way upstairs, perhaps. It might be. Had he not so used them? Yes. Why had he done so if he had candles in his pocket, which were so much easier to hold and so much more lasting than a lighted match? Ah, he could not say; he did not know; his mind was confused. He was awake when he should have been asleep. It was all a dream to him.

The coroner became still more persistent.

"Did you enter the library on your solitary visit to this old house?"

"I believe so."

"What did you do there?"

"Pattered around. I don't remember."

"What light did you use?"

"A candle, I think."

"You must know."

"Well, I had a candle. It was in a candelabrum."

"What candle and what candelabrum?"

"The same I used upstairs, of course."

"And you cannot remember where you left this candle and candelabrum when you finally quitted the house?"

"No. I wasn't thinking about candles."

"What were you thinking about?"

"The rupture with my wife and the bad name of the house I was in."

"Oh! And this was on Tuesday night?"

"Yes, sir."

"How can you prove this to us?"

"I cannot."

"But you swear?"

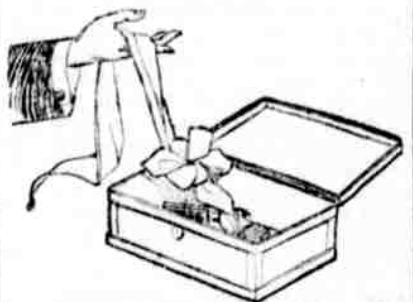
"I swear that it was Tuesday night, the night immediately preceding the one when—when my wife's death robbed me of all earthly happiness."

It was feelingly uttered, and several faces lightened; but the coroner repeating, "Is there no way you can prove this to our satisfaction?" the shadow settled again, and on no head more perceptibly than on that of the unfortunate witness.

It was now late in the day and the atmosphere of the room had become stifling, but no one seemed to be conscious of any discomfort, and a general gasp of excitement passed through the room when the coroner, taking out a box from under a pile of papers, disclosed to the general gaze the famous white ribbon with its dainty bow, lying on top of the fatal pistol.

This special feature, the most interesting one of all connected with

The telltale ribbon



this tragedy, should have been kept so long in reserve and brought out at this time, struck many of Mr. Jeffrey's closest friends as unnecessarily dramatic; but when the coroner, lifting out the ribbon, remarked tentatively:

"You know this ribbon?" we were struck by the involuntary cry of surprise which rose from some one in the crowd about the door than by the look with which Mr. Jeffrey eyed it and made the necessary reply.

That cry had something more than nervous excitement in it. Identifying the person who had uttered it as a certain busy little woman well known in town, I sent an officer to watch her; then recalled my attention to the point the coroner was attempting to make. He had forced Mr. Jeffrey to recognize the

ribbon as the one which had fastened the pistol to his wife's arm. Now he asked whether, in his opinion, a woman could tie such a bow to her own wrist, and when in common justice Mr. Jeffrey was obliged to say no, waited a third time before he put the general suspicion again into words:

"Can you not, by some means or some witness, prove to us that it was on Tuesday night and not on Wednesday you spent the hours you speak of on this scene of your marriage and your wife's death?"

The hopelessness which more than once had marked Mr. Jeffrey's features since the beginning of this inquiry reappeared with renewed force as this suggestive question fell again upon his ears, and he was about to repeat his plea of forgetfulness when the coroner's attention was diverted by a request made in his ear by one of the detectives. In another moment Mr. Jeffrey had been waived aside and a new witness sworn in.

You can imagine every one's surprise, mine most of all, when this witness proved to be Uncle David.

CHAPTER XIV.

I DO not know why the coroner had so long delayed to call this witness. What he said was in the way of confirming the last witness' testimony as to his having been at the Moore house on Tuesday evening. Mr. Moore, who was very particular as to dates and days, admitted that the light which he had seen in a certain window of his ancestral home on the evening when he summoned the police was but the repetition of one he had detected there the evening before. It was this repetition which alarmed him and caused him to break through all his usual habits and leave his home at night to notify the police.

The coroner asked him if he had seen Mr. Jeffrey go in on the night in question; if he had ever seen any one go in there since the wedding, or even if he had seen any one loitering about the steps or sneaking into the rear yard.

But the answer was always no; these same noses growing more and more emphatic, and the gentlemen more and more impenetrable and dignified as the examination went on. In fact, he was as unassailable a witness as I have ever heard testify before any jury.

Beyond the fact already mentioned of his having observed a light in the opposite house on the two evenings in question he admitted nothing. His life in the little cottage was so engrossing, he had his organ, his dog, why should he look out of the window? Had it not been for his neural habit of letting his dog run the pavement for a quarter of an hour before finally looking up for

the night he would not have seen as much as he did.

"Have you any stated hour for doing this?" the coroner now asked.

"Yes; half past six."

"And was this the hour when you saw that light?"

"Yes; both times."

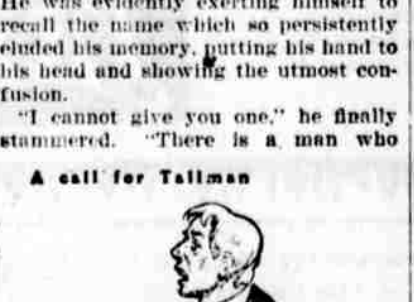
As he had appeared at the station house at a few minutes before 10, he was probably correct in this statement.

He wound up with such a distinct repetition of his former emphatic assertion as to the presence of light in the old house on Tuesday as well as Wednesday evening that Mr. Jeffrey's testimony in this regard received a decided confirmation. I looked to see some open recognition of this, when suddenly and with a persistence understood only by the police the coroner recalled Mr. Jeffrey and asked him what proof he had to offer that his visit of Tuesday had not been repeated the next night and that he was not in the building when that fatal trigger was pulled.

At this leading question a lawyer sitting near me edged himself forward as if he hoped for some sign from Mr. Jeffrey which would warrant him in interfering. But Mr. Jeffrey gave no such sign. I doubt if he even noticed this man's proximity, though he knew him well and had often employed him as his legal adviser in times gone by. He was evidently exerting himself to recall the name which so persistently eluded his memory, putting his hand to his head and showing the utmost confusion.

"I cannot give you one," he finally stammered. "There is a man who

A call for Tallman



could tell if only I could remember his name." Suddenly, with a loud cry which escaped him involuntarily, he gave a gasping laugh, and we heard the name "Tallman" leap from his lips.

The witness had at last remembered whom he had met at the cemetery gate at the hour or near the hour his wife lay dying in the lower part of the city.

The effect was electrical. One of the spectators—some country boor, no doubt—so far forgot himself as to cry out loud enough for all to hear:

"Tallman! Let us have Tallman!"

Of course he met with an instant rebuke, but I did not wait to hear it or to see order restored, for a glance from the coroner had already sent me to the door in search of this new witness.

My destination was the Cosmos club, for Phil Tallman and his habits and habits were as well known in Washington as the figure of Liberty on the summit of the capitol dome. When I saw him I did not wonder. Never have I seen a more amiable looking man or one with a more benevolent expression.

To my query as to whether he had ever met Mr. Jeffrey at or near the entrance of Rock Creek cemetery he replied with an amused look and the quick response:

"Of course I did. It was the very night that his wife—But what's up? You look excited for a detective."

"Come to the morgue and see. This testimony of yours will prove invaluable to Mr. Jeffrey."

The result was an absolute proof that Mr. Jeffrey had been near Soldiers' home as late as 7, which was barely fifteen minutes previous to the hour Mrs. Jeffrey's watch was stopped by her fall in the old house on Waver-

ley avenue. As the distance between the two places could not be compassed in that time, Mr. Jeffrey's alibi could be regarded as established.

When we were all rising, glad of an adjournment which restored free movement and an open interchange of speech, a sudden check in the general rush called our attention back to Mr. Jeffrey. He was standing facing Miss Tuttle, who had fainted away, sitting upright in her chair.



CHAPTER XV.

MR. JEFFREY'S examination and its triumphant conclusion created a great furor in town. What might be expected next? Something equally bold and reprehensible, of course, but what? It was a question which at the next sitting completely filled the inquest room.

To my great surprise Mr. Jeffrey was recalled to the stand.

Miss Tuttle sat in a less conspicuous position than on the previous day, and Mr. Moore, her uncle, was not there at all.

The testimony called for revived an old point which, seemingly had not been settled to the coroner's satisfaction.

Had Mr. Jeffrey placed the small stand holding the candelabrum on the spot where it had been found? No. Had he carried into the house at the time of his acknowledged visit the candles which had been afterward discovered there? No. He had had time to think since his hesitating and unsatisfactory replies of the day before, and he was now in a position to say that, while he distinctly remembered buying candles on his way to the Moore house, he had not found them in his pocket on getting there and had been obliged to make use of the matches he always carried on his person in order to find his way to the upstairs room where he felt positive he would find a

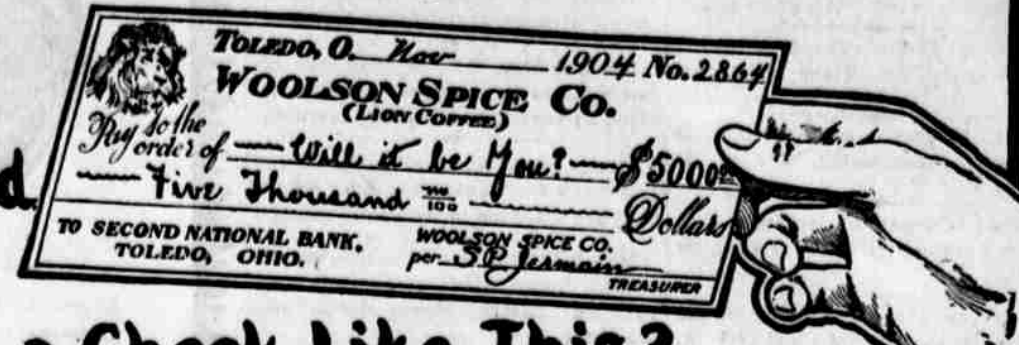
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3 Third Prize	\$1,000.00 each
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5 Fifth Prize	\$250.00 each
6 Sixth Prize	\$100.00 each
7 Seventh Prize	\$50.00 each
8 Eighth Prize	\$25.00 each
9 Ninth Prize	\$10.00 each
10 Tenth Prize	\$5.00 each
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At Buck House, Lynchburg, Thursday, September 15, October 13, November 10, December 8, January 5, February 2. Office Hours, 3 to 8.

At Harper House, Greenfield, Wednesday, September 21, October 10, November 16, December 14, January 11, February 8. Office Hours, 10 to 8.

Notice to Banks.

Sealed proposals are hereby invited from all banks situated in Highland county, Ohio, and duly incorporated under the laws of Ohio or of the United States as a depository of the money of said county, under the provisions of Sections 11861 to 11862, inclusive of Bates Annotated Statutes of Ohio, provided for county depositories. Said proposals shall stipulate the rate of interest, not less than one per cent. per annum that will be paid for the use of the money of the county, and shall contain the names of the sureties who will be offered upon the undertaking of the bank, filing the same in case the proposal is accepted or the failure of the interest-bearing securities proposed to be offered in lieu of such undertaking.

Said proposals will be received by the undersigned at the Auditor's office of said county until 10 o'clock a.m. of Saturday, September 3, 1904, and the right to reject any or all proposals is hereby reserved.

J. E. FOCKETT,
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